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THE "PATRONS OF INDUSTRY."

FROM SPEECH

OF

SIR OLIVER MOWAT

DELIVERED IN NORTH BRUCE,

23rd NOVEMBER, 1893.

PREVIOUS GENERAL ELECTIONS

and the Reform Record.

Until now the contests at the Ontario elections for the last twenty years have been between Reformers and Conservatives wherever the election turned on principle ; and the Provincial Liberal party have had the verdict of the country as a whole in their favor at every general election during that period. At past elections everything which could be said against the Ontario Government was said. Most of the things said now against us by the Conservative press and by the Conservative section of the Patrons was said at these past elections ; and a good many other groundless charges were made against us, which when investigated were so plainly unfounded that they are not repeated now. The public read or heard what our opponents urged at those former elections ; and the result at every general election demonstrated that the people were satisfied or more than satisfied with our record of useful legislation, of our fairness to all classes, of our prudent, economical, efficient and honest administration of public affairs, and of our successful maintenance of every important Provincial right, territorial and constitutional.

We showed, and the verdict of the people was, that during our long term of office the Reform Government and Legislature had been active and not unsuccessful legislators ; that we had availed ourselves of every legislative jurisdiction which under the B. N. A. Act a Province has, to promote the well being of all classes of the people. We had passed Acts for enlarging the electorate from time to time as public opinion was prepared for the enlargement ; Acts giving to the Province the ballot, first at Provincial elections, and afterwards at Municipal and certain School elections ; and Acts for improving our election laws in other important respects. We had passed other

important Acts for the special benefit of farmers ; Acts for the benefit in various ways of mechanics and wage-earners ; Acts respecting the public health, which, as administered, have already saved hundreds of lives ; Acts for reforming and simplifying the administration of justice ; Acts for improving the laws of property ; and Acts for improving the laws on every other subject within Provincial jurisdiction. We showed to the satisfaction of the people that we had employed usefully and beneficially the revenue and means of the Province, that we had executed with economy and due regard to the public interest the public works of the Province, and that we had observed like economy and care in all other expenditures with which we had to do. We showed that our institutions relating to agriculture, and to the public health, and our institutions for the insane and the blind and for deaf mutes, had been managed with an efficiency which had from time to time been observed and remarked upon by experts from other countries who had visited these institutions. We showed that this efficient management had been effected with an economy which had no known parallel in governmental management anywhere. We showed that the administration of justice had been carried on with a vigor and an energy which had defied attack. We showed that whatever matters of administration or legislation admitted of just comparison with like matters elsewhere, the comparison was never against Ontario, and, especially in matters of administration, was on the contrary in our favor.

Our record since the last general election has corresponded with our record previously. The work of useful legislation has been continued, and the work of honest and prudent administration in public affairs. In every session since there has been important legislation in the public interest. Every subject which has been ripe for advantageous legislation has been dealt with, and dealt with in a manner giving general satisfaction.

THE PATRONS OF INDUSTRY.

At this election for North Bruce the "Patrons of Industry" have nominated a candidate in opposition to both the Reform and Conservative candidates. A new element has thus been introduced which requires attention. The Patrons of Industry constitute an important organization. They include a considerable number of farmers and others in some of the constituencies, and they include Reformers as well as Conservatives. I heartily and gladly acknowledge the honesty of the great body of Patrons. I acknowledge also the importance of some of the objects set forth in their platform, and the fitness of a union of farmers of all parties in order to accomplish common objects on which they are agreed and which may not be obtainable otherwise. But, with all respect to the organization, I think it clear that a majority are acting under a mistake on some essential points, and that those Patrons who are Reformers have been placed by the rules of the organization in a false position as regards Provincial affairs. My long experience in public life enables me to point out these mistakes on the part of some of my fellow-Reformers, and I wish to take this opportunity of doing so, so far as this can be done in the hour or so for which I am to occupy your attention.

It is said that for want of union amongst farmers one farmer 'kills' another's vote. Is it not right that if one farmer votes wrong another farmer should 'kill' the wrong vote, by himself voting right? Would it not have been in right 1878 to kill a National Policy vote by voting for the candidate who was against the N. P.? The propriety of voting with or against our neighbor depends altogether on circumstances. Why should Reformers not have 'killed' Conservative votes for the Provincial House during the last 21 years? Reformers believed that the Reform party was giving them good government, and so believing, their 'killing' the votes of those who voted against the Reform candidates was a duty, not a crime; was a good and right thing, not a curse.

PRIMARY OBJECTS OF THE PATRONS.

I understand that the primary object of the patrons' organization was to strengthen the movement in favor of reciprocity between Canada and the United States, and of a reduction of customs duties to the basis of a Revenue Tariff. These objects are of special interest to farmers, whether Conservatives or Reformers, as enabling them to get more for what they produce, and to pay less for articles they have to buy; and in the present depression these objects are of special importance to the farming community. So, also, all were interested in such legislation as would protect farmers from combinations and monopolies; all were alike dissatisfied with the Dominion Franchise Act; all wanted the voters' lists for the Dominion as well as the Province to be prepared by the municipal officers. In general they wanted the Senate to be abolished, or reformed, as being in its present condition useless and expensive; they were against the Dominion redistribution of the electoral divisions; and they favored confining the electoral divisions to county boundaries. They condemned the Dominion railway grants, some of them having been a scandal; and the only apparent remedy being the entire abolition of Dominion railway grants. They were also against other points of Dominion policy; for in opposition to the Dominion policy, they were for the reservation of public lands for actual settlers; for purity of administration; and for rigid economy in the expenditure of the revenues of the country.

These particulars constituted a large and important platform for the new party on which there could be the most cordial and unobjectionable union of Conservatives and Reformers who held these views, and I should think might well have contented the leaders of the organization without other questions being introduced. But all these matters relate to Dominion politics. Many Conservatives, in consequence of their dissatisfaction with the policy of their Conservative leaders and the Conservative Government, were disposed to oppose them, but were not disposed to go over to the Reform camp. Some half-way house was the desideratum. Reformers, on the other hand, had no quarrel with their leaders, nor with the Reform Government or party; but it seems to have been thought necessary to make some concession to their Conservative associates who had always opposed the Reform Government and Reform party. The problem appears to have been, how could Reformers be induced to take ground against their party to the extent necessary, whatever it should be.

FARMERS WELL REPRESENTED ALREADY.

For that purpose a cry has been raised that farmers are not sufficiently represented in the Ontario Assembly, and that their interests are consequently ignored or disregarded there. Nothing could be more unfounded than this. There is not and never has been in the Provincial House on farmers' questions a particle of antagonism between the farmers of the House and those members who are not farmers. There is not a farmers' question on which a division on those lines has ever occurred in my time, or, as far as I know, at any time. In a House which has to deal with the tariff question there might be room for such a division, as the interest of some manufacturers may, as such, be antagonistic to the interest of farmers. But the Provincial Legislature has in its jurisdiction neither that question nor any other yet suggested in which the farmers and the rest of the community have not a common interest.

The object of the Patrons is said to be to get 25, or from 25 to 30, farmers and Patrons in the House of Commons at Ottawa, and in the Legislative Assembly at Toronto, at the next general election. The Patron leaders and speakers have surely overlooked—at all events I have seen no allusion to the fact—that in the Ontario Assembly, as it stood before the recent vacancies occurred in Bruce and Lambton, there were at least 28 farmers, and these include some of the best farmers in the Province.

Mr. DRYDEN :—The number is 32.

Well, the Minister of Agriculture is likely to know the exact number better than I do. Either number in an Assembly of 91 would be a larger proportion than, according to the last census, farmers and farmers' sons bear to the population of the Province. Then of the members who are not farmers, several are the sons of farmers, and all their sympathies are with the occupation which their fathers followed.

Further : Of the eight members who constitute the Government, five were brought up on a farm, and in their early days worked on a farm ; six of the eight are sons of men who followed farming for a living, some of them during their whole lives, and some for part of their lives ; and one of the eight has been a practical farmer all his life, is a practical farmer still, and is now Minister of Agriculture. If you ask him he will tell you that he has never found his colleagues or the House indifferent, not to speak of hostile, to any proposal which appeared to him calculated to benefit the farming community. It has always been among the farmers that my own strength as a member of Parliament has lain. When I represented South Ontario, the county town, where farmers had little or no influence, always gave a majority against me, though my majorities for the whole riding varied from about 500 to nearly 800. In North Oxford, which I now represent, the county town in 1883 gave a small majority for me, and in 1886 a small majority against me, while in the whole riding my majority in 1883 was 883, and in 1886 was 1,157. My other four elections in North Oxford have been by acclamation.

REFORM MEASURES FOR FARMERS.

It is out of the question to suppose that a House and a Government constituted as I have described, could be hostile or indifferent to the interest of farmers. On the contrary, the Ontario Legislature in its at-

tention to all that concerns the interest of farmers is in advance of every State of the American Union, and almost every country in the world. Let me remind you of some illustrations of our active interest in matters specially affecting farmers.

More than thirteen years ago the Ontario Government appointed an Agricultural Commission, consisting chiefly of farmers. The commissioners investigated the whole subject of agriculture and kindred pursuits. They held sessions in various parts of the Province, took the evidence of leading agriculturists, stock-breeders, dairymen and others, as to the condition of the several industries which the witnesses represented. They also investigated the condition of agriculture and of similar pursuits in the United States, Great Britain and other countries. After concluding their investigations they made a report which is universally acknowledged to have been of vast value in disseminating useful information on the subject of agricultural pursuits; and their report has been a text-book for farmers, dairymen, stock-breeders, apiaists, and others ever since. To supply the demand for copies we had to print several large editions of the work for distribution to the farming community.

Then the Agricultural College and Model and Experimental Farm at Guelph have been carried on successfully, and it is now admitted everywhere that the institution is one of the foremost of the kind, if not the very foremost, in existence anywhere.

Then take the travelling dairy established by the Minister of Agriculture, which has proved an unqualified success. Its meetings have been held in every part of the Province. No matter what the political complexion of any district might be, the travelling dairy has been at its service upon the application of the local dairymen; and the highest testimony to the efficiency and usefulness of the work comes alike from political opponents and political friends of the Government.

Again, a Bureau of Statistics was established some years ago by the Ontario Government and has also done great service to the agricultural and industrial interests of the Province. Bankers, financial agents and business men generally unite with farmers and others in praise of its operations.

Further: We have appropriated for the drainage of farm lands a permanent fund of \$550,000 to be lent to municipalities for drainage purposes; and as the money lent is returned to the treasury, it is again lent out to other municipalities for the same purposes. In this way the loans for drainage purposes since 1872 inclusive have amounted to nearly a million of dollars (\$994,959.80). An immense quantity of farm land in all parts of the Province has by this means been drained, rendered more fertile and increased greatly in value.

Nor should it be forgotten that by the success of this Government in securing the once disputed territory, many thousands of acres of fine agricultural lands were secured to our Province. In the Rainy River district alone there is a sufficient area of agricultural land for several large counties; and this land, let me say, is equal to the very best in the Province.

These are only a few of the things that the Reform Party, through its representatives, has been doing in the interest of the farmers of the Province. I am more than interested in them. As a Canadian

I am proud of the striking evidence recently given at Chicago of the achievements of the farmers of Ontario. In this respect Ontario has literally led the world. No State in the Union and no country in Europe has achieved like success. All the Provinces of Canada did well, but the lion's share of honors came to Ontario. In horses, cattle, pigs, sheep and honey our Province carried off a large proportion of the highest prizes. In cheese, Ontario literally swept the board. Let me mention also that in its educational exhibit a part of which was agricultural, Ontario won the highest possible award; and so high an authority as Sir Richard Webster, the Exposition representative of Great Britain, declared this exhibit to be the nearest to his ideal of perfection, of what an educational exhibit should be, that he had ever seen.

GRANTS FOR AGRICULTURAL PURPOSES.

In further illustration of the interest taken by the Reform Party in all that specially concerns farmers, let me tell you something of the annual grants made out of the Provincial exchequer for agricultural objects. Most or all of the Provincial expenditure is for the purposes of common interest to all classes, including farmers. On this point I have but to mention the expense necessarily incurred in carrying on the Government, and in legislation, in the administration of justice, in the maintenance of the asylums and central prison, and in the assistance heretofore given to railways, to hospitals and charities, as well as everything else for which appropriations are made. In all these, farmers have a common interest with the rest of the people.

But, in addition to the expenditure which is for the common needs or common interest of all classes, there is a large expenditure by the Province every year for the special benefit of farmers. This expenditure in 1892 amounted in all to more than \$200,000. The particulars appear in the published accounts.

The first item is for the department of the Minister of Agriculture, his officers and expenses, amounting to		\$15,975 85
Drainage Commission.....		4,381 88
Dehorning Commission.....		2,770 50
Electoral Division Societies		72,200 00
Grants to other associations.....		18,716 45
Farmers' Institutes		8,191 03
Incidentals, chiefly for printing bureau reports and bulletins, etc.....		8,458 80
Forestry.....		1,881 23
Tree-planting.....		773 70
Bureau of Statistics.....		3,844 11
Agricultural College		22,205 70
Buildings at Agricultural College.....		27,156 00
Model and Experimental Farm proper....		9,467 71
Experiments		5,534 47
Dairy		10,092 64
Garden		4,644 44
Mechanical.....		1,270 86
Total.....		<hr/> \$217,567 13

Every item on this list was considered and approved by the numerous farmers on the Reform side of the House; and I do not recollect that any of them were disapproved of by any of the farmers on the Opposition side.

The total paid out during my Premiership in the special interest of farmers and farming has aggregated millions of dollars.

THE PATRONS' PLATFORM.

Now, in the face of all the facts which I have mentioned, how is the statement to be made good that the Reform party has neglected the special interests of farmers? Is there anything in the Patrons' official platform which points to such neglect?

Not one article of the thirteen in the platform affects farmers specially, or otherwise than in common with all other classes. Of the articles affecting Provincial matters, one only is not in accordance with the policy and practice hitherto pursued by the Ontario Reform Government and Legislature; and that one is the patronage article, which might well be left in abeyance in view of the much more important objects set forth in the platform and as to which there is no difference between us.

The first article in the platform is 'Maintenance of British Connection.' Happily this is a principle not peculiar to the Patrons of Industry, but common to the two historical parties as well.

The second article is 'The reservation of the public lands for the actual settler.' That has always been our policy and practice, but has not been the policy or practice of the Dominion.

The third article is 'Purity of administration and absolute independence of Parliament.' This also is the doctrine of the Reform party, and has always been the practice of the Ontario Government and Legislature.

The fourth article is 'Rigid economy in every department of the public service.' This also is the Reform doctrine and practice. One illustration of this is, that our institutions are carried on with unsurpassed efficiency at a less cost per head than similar institutions in the United States, where the democracy rules. This expenditure is a large item in our total expenditures, amounting in 1892 to \$818,435. Another illustration is the case of the new Parliament and departmental building, which has been put up without any extras, a feat which a public corporation or community, or private individual, is seldom able to accomplish when erecting a large building for any purpose. No boodling was permitted; and the smallness of the cost of the buildings is an astonishment to every one competent to judge. Some American gentlemen who visited the building declared that with them it would have cost twice or thrice what it has cost to us.

The fifth article is 'Simplification of the laws and a general reduction of the machinery of government.' What reduction of the machinery is meant does not appear. As to the simplification of the laws, every party is in favor of this to the utmost extent practicable. With a view to it the whole statutes of the Province were revised and consolidated in 1877, and again in 1887; and, since 1887 some of the most important classes of statutes have been again revised and con-

solidated. Then, as to a 'general reduction in the expenses of the Government': The expense of the Provincial Government is now as low as is consistent with the efficiency of the public service; and I am prepared to prove this in regard to every branch of the Government in reference to which the contrary may be alleged.

The sixth article is the abolition of the Canadian Senate. This refers to Dominion politics exclusively.

The seventh article is, 'A system of civil service reform that will give each county power to appoint or elect all county officials paid by them, except County Judges.' As to county officials paid by the county, there is now but one salaried officer I know of who is, in part, paid out of municipal funds and not appointed by the municipality, namely, the gaoler, whom the sheriff has always appointed, he being responsible for the gaol and prisoners, and the appointment being subject to approval by the Government in order to prevent the chance of sheriffs being misled into appointing a personal friend who may not be qualified for the duties. This is the only article in the platform which takes ground antagonistic to the Reform party. There have always been in the Reform party some who have favored, more or less, as a matter of theory, the local election or appointment of the local officers of Government, or some of them; but this did not occasion their withdrawing or being excluded from the Reform party.

The eighth, ninth and tenth articles are the articles as to the tariff, reciprocity, combines and monopolies, all of which refer to the Dominion only.

The eleventh article is, 'Prohibition of the bonusing of railways by Government grants, as contrary to the public interest.' I presume that this article refers to Dominion grants, because the policy of the Ontario Government and Legislature has for some years been against further Government grants to any railway, except colonization railways through lands belonging to the Province in the unorganized territory. Grants were made by the Ontario Legislature as well as by municipalities to procure the building of railways in the settled parts of the Province until these parts were pretty well supplied with railways. Farmers were amongst the strongest advocates of these railway grants, and farmers as a class profited most by the railways aided. On the other hand, some of the grants made to railways by the Dominion Government in the settled parts of the Dominion, and perhaps elsewhere, have been under circumstances which made them a scandal.

The twelfth article is, 'Preparation of the Dominion and Provincial voters' lists by municipal officers.' The Provincial lists have now and always been prepared by the municipal officers. It is the Dominion lists which are prepared otherwise.

The thirteenth article is, 'Conformity of electoral divisions to county boundaries as constituted for municipal purposes, as far as the principle of representation by population will allow.' This, also, I presume, has reference to the Dominion. Not only has Ontario legislation, in giving additional members, not disregarded county boundaries where they had been observed in the distribution made in the B. N. A. Act, but in several cases we limited or extended electoral divisions to county boundaries where these had not been followed in the B. N. A. Act. This was so as regards the Counties of Peterboro', Victoria, Lambton

and Kent. For this purpose we abolished Bothwell, which was one of the electoral divisions created for the purpose of the B. N. A. Act, and not following municipal county boundaries. We have not seen our way to re-arrange all the constituencies which by the B. N. A. Act and previous legislation did not conform to county boundaries, nor has any one proposed that we should, but we have diminished the number of such irregular constituencies. On the other hand, the Dominion Parliament's redistribution of 1882 increased their number, and disregarded the municipal county boundaries, wherever any political advantage could be obtained by doing so.

MUNICIPAL ASSESSMENT LAW.

One statement at a Patrons' meeting was, that a "a farmer has to pay taxes on the full value of his property; but the man who holds \$100,000 worth of bonds or debentures pays only on the interest on the investments." The fact is, that there are important respects in which the farmer is favored, and other classes of taxpayers complain of this favoritism. Thus, the Assessment law exempts all horses, cattle, sheep and swine which are owned and held by any owner or tenant of any farm where such owner or tenant is carrying on the general business of farming. (55 Vict., c. 48, s. 7, sub-section 14a.) As for Provincial and Municipal debentures being exempt from municipal taxation, the object was to increase by so much the value and saleableness of these debentures, for the benefit of the Province and of municipalities. The exemption extends to Dominion debentures also, but of these very few, if any, are held in the Province, and the extension of the exemption to Dominion debentures has never hitherto been complained of. As the farmer is assessed for the farm, so the holder of debentures is assessed for any real estate which he may hold. A farmer pays no taxes on his stock, while the merchant and manufacturer pay taxes on their goods. The interest only on mortgages has hitherto been assessable instead of the principal, the reason being that the practical effect of taxing the mortgagee for the principal was thought to be, that he would always take a covenant from the mortgagor that the mortgagor should pay this tax as well as all other taxes, and the poor mortgagor would thus be taxed twice—first on his land, and secondly on the money he borrows on it. Mortgagors find it hard enough to pay the one tax, without having to pay two. But the question of taxing the principal is a fair one for discussion and honest difference of opinion; it has never been a party question. Another Patron spoke of "millions of dollars worth of property in the shape of bonds, notes and mortgages," being exempt from municipal taxation. Bonds and notes are not exempt any more than any other unspecified personal property.

THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS.

A speaker at one of the meetings is reported to have made this statement: "One object of the Patrons is to find out where the public money goes. Patrons (he said) do know where the money which they pay to their lodges goes. Detailed accounts are given every year. Could he tell us where every cent of the money which finds its way into the hands of the different parties in power finds its outlet? There must (the speaker averred) be a big hole in the bottom of the chest somewhere.

Better let the Patrons try and find it." Now, detailed accounts of all Provincial expenditure, showing where every cent goes, are given every year, and as regularly as like accounts may be given to lodges. Moreover, every year a Committee of the House is appointed to examine these accounts. Of this committee, besides the Government supporters thereon, the ablest members of the Opposition are members, and they do their best every year to find out anything wrong, or anything which they may persuade people is wrong. Vouchers are inspected; witnesses are called and are publicly examined. Patrons could not be more zealous than these members are, and for want of experience would not be nearly so efficient in the investigation. The detailed proceedings of the committee are published every year, and if there has been no discovery of anything wrong, it is because there was nothing wrong to be discovered.

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In a word, and as a conclusion of the whole matter, I claim that the Reform party has always been specially a farmers' party, while faithful to every other class as well; and that THE REFORM PARTY IS THE TRUE FARMERS' PARTY.

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